

## This Day in History... September 1, 1923

### First Modern First Day Cover

On September 1, 1923, George Linn produced the first cacheted First Day Covers, giving birth to the modern FDC industry.

President Warren G. Harding died suddenly on August 2, 1923. He was beloved across the country at the time and three million mourners gathered to watch his funeral train pass by. *The New York Times* called it “the most remarkable demonstration in American history of affection, respect, and reverence for the dead.



*The perf. 11 Harding stamp issued on September 1*

As was customary, the US Post Office immediately began work on a memorial stamp to be issued on September 1, 1923. George Linn, who would later found Linn's Stamp News, greatly admired Harding and wanted to do something special to mark the stamp's issue. He chose to print a black five-line cachet with a black border on a variety of envelopes to affix the stamps to.



*Imperforate Harding stamp*

Before this time, virtually all First Day Covers were uncacheted – having no design or inscription relating to the subject of the stamp on the cover. He then drove from Columbus to Marion, Ohio, to get his envelopes canceled. Linn's covers were popular and are often considered the beginning of modern First Day Covers.

US #610 was a special stamp that was to be issued for a limited time of about 60 to 90 days. Of the 200,000 copies sent to Marion, Ohio (Harding's hometown), 180,000 were sold the first day of issue.

Demand for this stamp was far greater than for any previous special issue. It was impossible to meet the demand by printing from flat plates alone. The Bureau of Engraving and Printing was finally authorized to supplement that printing with a rotary press version. This was the first commemorative or memorial stamp issued using two printing methods. Eventually, over one billion stamps were issued, stretching the original 60-day limit to nearly 6 full months.



*Rotary press Harding stamp*

Another exciting aspect of the Harding Memorial issue is that a rare stamp (#613) was created when a sheet of the rotary press stamps was fed through the flat plate perforator (gauge 11).

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